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Personal Privacy Protection Act passes Senate

LANSING – State Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, announced Thursday that Michigan residents are closer to having greater protections placed on their privacy under legislation passed by the Michigan Senate.

“The recent advances in technology, such as camera phones, have made this legislation necessary,” said Stamas, vice-chair of the Senate Committee on State Police and Military Affairs. “We need to do everything in our power to help protect the privacy of Michigan’s residents. We need this law on the books.”

In support of the legislation, recent testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee was compelling and emotional. One victim spoke of the emotional and psychological devastation wrought as a result of being covertly taped while in a restroom and dressing area of a private residence.

A representative of the Michigan Association of Prosecuting Attorneys also testified to the need for more up-to-date statutes and stiffer penalties in order to deter and punish perpetrators of this growing problem.

Senate Bill 918 creates specific prohibitions and criminal penalties for acts of electronic voyeurism. Acts of video voyeurism include capturing or transmitting a visual image of a person undressed or wearing only undergarments.

Examples of circumstances or places where a person would normally have an expectation of privacy include private or public restrooms, showers, tanning beds and locker rooms.

The bill also prohibits and creates stronger penalties for distributing such images, and provides stronger penalties for repeat offenders.

“We all have a right to privacy and those who invade our rights should be punished,” Stamas said. “This bill will help protect the rights and privacy of residents across the state.”

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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Editor’s note: Audio clips of Senator Stamas are available on the Internet at
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/>.